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The American National Red Cross Association

Help When Warring Elements Bring Suffering as Well as in Times That Nations War—Practical Business Methods.

How full of meaning the words "Red Cross." They bespeak humanitarianism, those wearing the badge are given right of way wherever emergency calls for quick relief, ready response of medical skill and nurse's aid. We hear the San Franciscans were somewhat irritated that President Roosevelt should have doubted the people of their stricken city would be equal to organization and conduct of relief work, for a moment felt unready to bid welcome to the Red Cross official sent out to take charge of contributions; but the president immediately gave assurance that turning over authority to the Red Cross association was merely intended to fill a gap, an emergency measure, the organization brought to the fore that people might feel their gifts were to be disbursed by experienced hands, by business-like methods. This assurance, and the attitude of Dr. Devine, the Red Cross representative, at once puts matters on an amiable footing, city and Red Cross are to act in harmony.

Miss Clara Barton, the organizer of the first American Red Cross society, is now well up in years, and some time ago it was thought best that a younger person assume the responsibilities of president. Through a long series of campaigns—beginning with the forest fires in Michigan and end-

organized was seen, more than ever before, in 1904, comparing it with other branches of the International Red Cross. Leaving out of calculation doctors, nurses, hospitals and materials, in the item of funds alone the Italian society reported in that year over \$800,000, the German society over \$900,000, the Austrians over \$1,700,000, the French over \$1,800,000, and the Japanese over \$4,000,000. Ours reported \$1,702! As the Japanese society was largest in material resources, so it was also largest in membership—over 800,000 adherents; our membership was 123! Despite its useful work the American Red Cross was not only poor in funds and members, its affairs had been somewhat loosely conducted. By an act of congress passed a year ago (1904), the American National Red Cross was newly organized. It is now incorporated under the laws of the District of Columbia and is brought directly under government supervision. Among other members of the board of incorporators, the charter provides that five are to be chosen from the departments of state, war, navy, treasury and justice. The Hon. William H. Taft, secretary of war, navy, treasury and justice. The Red Cross, and Surgeon General William K. van Reypen, U. S. N., retired, is the chairman of the central committee. A disbursing officer of the war



DR. DEVINE, RED CROSS REPRESENTATIVE IN SAN FRANCISCO.

ing with the Galveston disaster—Miss Barton had directed the activities of the society in a work of much beneficence; "large sums of money, contributed by the public, were usefully expended; human suffering was alleviated in many widely separated fields; and thousands of people were helped to get on their feet after they had been stricken down by catastrophes of nature or the operations of war."

While by no means minimizing the beneficence of the work done, criticism began to be heard of a lack of business methods in the Red Cross work, chief among the criticisms the declaration of the society's failure to make and publish properly audited statements of receipts and disbursements. During the Spanish war a number of business men in New York, wishing to cooperate with the Red Cross work, offered to give the society all the moneys collected if Miss Barton would allow them to send a representative to Cuba to supervise expenditures and audit accounts. Their proposition was declined, and the business men decided to organize what became known as the New York Red Cross Auxiliary, the organization controlling its own expenditures and at the end publishing a detailed account thereof.

It was at this time the suggestion was made, with all the tact possible, that Miss Barton resign the post she had so long honored and her place be taken by an actual business man. Miss Barton appeared to think favorably of the suggestion at first, but later decided not to retire, obtained a charter from congress and reorganized the society. From now on the public were made aware of serious increase of friction—details need not be entered into; suffice it to say the public rejoiced when discord ceased, a bill was passed incorporating the American National Red Cross association.

An editorial in the Outlook, calling attention to the first annual meeting of the reorganized society, makes this comment of the need there had been for reorganization: "The American Red Cross was organized in 1882. For more than 20 years it has led an active existence. How far short it has come of the objects for which it was

department now audits the accounts." It was a Swiss gentleman, Henri Dunant, who founded the great Red Cross work. A man of wealth, he was traveling with his servant in northern Italy at the time of the dreadful battle of Solferino (June 24, 1859), when 300,000 men faced each other in deadly array, when France bought her victory at the cost of 17,000 men, the killed and wounded Austrians numbered 20,000. The morning after the "glorious victory" the sun rose on a sight of indescribable horrors, ambulances and doctors so few little could be done to relieve the suffering, dead and wounded must be uncared for. M. Dunant was so impressed with the dreadful spectacle he determined to take some step to waken the nations to the need of organized volunteer aid. He traveled from court to court in Europe, and as a result of his efforts a conference was held in Geneva in 1863, the following year the convention was ratified by the high signatory powers; provision made for reforms in the treatment of the injured in battle, for the protection of hospital work, all hospitals to be indicated by a certain flag, a red cross on a white ground.

Shortly after the institution of the Red Cross its beneficence was called into play. In the war of 1866 nearly 14,000 wounded Austrians were cared for by the Prussian society of the Red Cross, and in the Franco-Prussian war the Red Cross had 25,000 beds in towns between Dusseldorf and Baden alone. It was while helping on the battlefield in the last named war that Miss Barton, one of the best nurses of our civil war, realized the need for organizing a Red Cross society in America, and on her return home she laid the matter before President Garfield, himself a soldier and cognizant of conditions in time of war. Without undue delay the American Red Cross society was organized. "Even outside the miseries of war, this organization has for its prime object the relief of the suffering. Muskets and cannon may be silent for awhile, but the warring elements, fire, water and wind may cause suffering at any time. With this in view there has been added to the original what is called the American amendment."

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